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Volume Eight

May, 1986

Number Two

THE JOINT MEETING OF SMA/SALA - GREAT SUCCESS

Engaging in the most challenging and productive session to date, the societies of Alabama and Mississippi Archivists met jointly at the University of Southern Mississippi Education Conference Center on April 28-29 in Long Beach, Miss. Five sessions over the two days, sparked by creative papers delivered to the fifty-plus participants, addressed topics of critical concern to archivists of the two states. Participation by the directors of the Alabama and Mississippi Archives and History Departments, Edwin Bridges and Elbert Hilliard provided authoritative input. Presidents Michael Thomason and Linda Overman of the Alabama and Mississippi societies kicked off the sessions, well organized by Richard J. Cox and Terry Latour.

Session 1: EIGHTY-FIVE YEARS AND COUNTING: THE ARCHIVAL PROFESSION IN ALABAMA AND MISSISSIPPI

The first session of the joint meeting set the stage for two days of analysis and discussion of issues affecting the profession. Introduced by Dowe Littleton (ADAH), Dale Foster (Mobile Municipal Archives), developed the 85 year history of the first two state archives in the nation. Citing the contributions and difficulties of the various directors through the decades, Foster considered Depression Era efforts of the National Historical Records Survey to inventory county records as a lost opportunity to institutionalize local records retention. He concluded that although 1950s legislation in the two states set minimal standards, a tremendous amount of work remains to be done.

Julia Marks Young, University of Southern Mississippi and editor of the The American Archivists, addressed current issues and future direction for archivists in Alabama and Mississippi. Stating that recent NHPRC-sponsored assessment reports of the Alabama (1985) and Mississippi (1982) archives found a "litany of woes" similar to other such reports, she urged that these reports not become a lost opportunity for reform. She suggested present records advisory boards be converted to active leadership coordinating groups, increased roles for state-wide publications, study committees, broadened public and professional education and a regional archival organization. Each state should not "reinvent the wheel."

(continued on page 3)

The Primary Source is a quarterly publication of news and ideas produced by the Society of Mississippi Archivists, a non-profit organization of professional archivists and interested persons.

Your contributions are welcome. Write The Primary Source, P.O. Box 1151, Jackson, MS 39205.

Deadlines for inclusion are: #1 (February) January 31; #2 (May) April 30; #3 (August) July 31; #4 (November) October 31.

Editor.....Vacant

Assistant Editor.....Suzanne Steel

Dear Colleagues:

With the close of the conference "Eighty-Five Years and Counting: The Archival Profession in Alabama, Mississippi, and the Nation," the Society of Mississippi Archivists began a new organizational year. In the eight and one-half years since the Society was founded, it has distinguished itself among American archival organizations with its informative and innovative programs, its admirable publications, and its impressive membership support. More importantly, the work of the Society has had a significant, positive impact on the preservation of our historical heritage in Mississippi. In the next year I look forward to working with you to maintain the excellence of our existing programs and to develop more effective efforts to foster the preservation of our historical documentary records.

We owe a debt of gratitude to outgoing president Linda L. Overman, who has left the organization in good health, and to outgoing council members Onva K. Boshears, Jr., and Helen M. Crawford. Likewise, we owe thanks to Bernice Bell who concludes her term on council as past president (1984-1985), as well as both Martha C. Sparrow and Franklin N. Walker who resigned their positions on council because of relocations out of state. All deserve special thanks for their dedication to the Society and the many hours of work they performed on its behalf.

This year we welcome Mickey Hennen as the Society's new vice-president and Martha Knott, Cynthia Lewis, Suzanne Steel, and Anne Wells as new council members. Alice Cox continues to serve the Society as our secretary/treasurer and Linda Overman continues to serve on council as past president. Dan Den Bleyker and H.T. Holmes, along with several of the above mentioned people, have consented to serve as chairpersons of the Society's committees. Each of these individuals and the many other committee members and volunteers deserve our thanks and appreciation for their commitment to the Society and its work. They also deserve our support and assistance. So please be cooperative if called upon for assistance, or better yet, keep the spirit of volunteerism alive and offer your help without being asked.

The next year promises to be an active one. We are making tentative plans for a fall workshop and another joint meeting with Alabama is slated for April 26-28, 1987 at a retreat near Columbiana, Alabama. Several of the Conservation Leaflets are being revised for publication and we hope to have several

leaflets prepared during the year. A committee on Archives and Society has been appointed, and my hope is that it will lead to initiatives which will promote an understanding of the role of archives and the work of archivists within Mississippi.

We appreciate the support you have given the Society in the past and naturally hope that it will continue. If there are particular needs which you feel the Society is not meeting, please let us know. You are the Society, and we feel that it should be responsive to the needs and suggestions of its members.

Lastly, just a reminder that the Society membership year now runs from annual meeting to annual meeting (May through April). If you have not renewed your membership, please do so at the earliest possible date. Your membership support is very important to us. Moreover, if you would ask at least one friend to join the Society we would be assured a sound basis of support to continue our programs.

Have a great summer!

Best regards,

Terry S. Latour

President

Society of Mississippi Archivists

(Joint Meeting, cont. from page 1)

In response to these challenges, Elbert Hilliard, Mississippi Department of Archives and History Director, agreed that time was at hand to "undertake a revival," and to restructure the State Records Advisory Board through appropriate legislation. He noted that NHPRC funds are drying up and that budget cuts have had an impact on archival development, but cited progress in staffing, pay, and facilities. He indicated he liked the idea of SALA/SMA study committees.

Ed Bridges, ADAH Director, states that the Assessment Report would be a failure if it did not lead to action. He viewed the report as part of a process to engage the state and to build political support, and indicated that in Alabama some "good steps" had been taken, including a start on building a professional staff and obtaining increased budgetary support. He questioned the effectiveness of using the Historical Records Advisory Board as a planning organization, due to its non-professional and possibly political nature.

Discussion centered on the need for state archives to assume a leadership role in providing guidance and the difficulties in getting organizations to respond. As Ed Bridges put it, "find a seam you can mine".

Session 2: ARCHIVAL BASICS: CHALLENGES IN THE NEXT EIGHTY-FIVE YEARS

Two interesting presentations addressed the issues involved in training archivists and in challenging the basic nature of archives organization.

Based on the experience of Georgia Archives Institute, now sponsored by Emory University, Linda Matthews, the director of the Institute, cited its formation in 1967 to meet a need to train "lay custodians" to care properly for records. Varying from four weeks to two weeks over the years, the program has served a useful role in meeting this requirement, but raises general questions on the depth and scope of available pre and in-service archival training.

Ed Bridges, ADAH, questioned the premise of centralized archives, compared to decentralized records storage options. Citing the 1982 challenge by David Bearman to redirect the National Archives Program toward decentralized storage, hotly resisted by the National Archives in 1983, Bridges cited that the first centralized archives were a product of the French and Industrial Revolutions. He indicated that the present post-industrial period and on-going information proliferation demand innovative and decentralized storage options.

Discussion addressed a number of issues: separate state department records repositories, role of libraries, suitability of lay custodians, the need for archival degree education, and the need to define the archival profession.

Session 3: SPECIAL THEME ARCHIVES AND THE ARCHIVAL PROFESSION

Session three of the joint SALA/SMA meeting was introduced by Jane Britton of the ADAH. Britton noted that theme archives are a recent development and are partly the result of the 1960s "Great Society," with its emphasis on increased funding for special projects and of the "new history" that developed concurrently. Speakers Suzanne Flandreau Steel and Michael Thomason described two special archives in our region, and discussed the problems and rewards of special collections. Both speakers noted the prevalence of special formats in their collections, which present particular problems of conservation, preservation, storage, and access. Both repositories have also experienced problems with adequate staffing, in defining and implementing collection policies, and in gaining bibliographic control of their holdings. Despite the problems, however, the speakers noted that each of their theme archives provided a valuable community service. It was evident both speakers derived a great deal of pleasure from their work.

Suzanne Flandreau Steel described the Blues Archive, which is located at the University of Mississippi. The Archive was created in 1983 from three large special collections, including B.B. King's record collection, which had been donated to the school in 1980. Beginning with an initial staff of one part-time professional, the staff has now grown to three full-time staff members as well as student assistants. A major difficulty the Archive faces is the prevalence of special formats, notably discs, tapes, films and videos, and the lack of traditional documentary sources. These present problems in all areas of archival work, from storage to reference. Another difficulty lies in defining the scope of the collection, specifically answering the question, "What is the Blues?" Despite the problems, the Archive is doing well. Steel noted the rewards of documenting a living culture, and of being able to give

something back to a community and culture that has often been exploited in the past.

Michael Thomason of the University of South Alabama (USA) discussed the USA Photographic Archives. These theme archives were created in 1978 from a core collection of 100,000 negatives previously stored in the Mobile Public Library. Since that time it has continued to grow, adding thousands of images, while at the same time dealing with the problems of special formats, administrative control, staffing, funding, and poor housing. Recent changes include increased staff (history graduate students), increased attention on the part of the university administration, and the addition of non-photographic records. In the eight years of its existence the USA Photographic Archives has grown from a single photograph collection to a major repository of regional material relating to Mobile and South Alabama. It is now able to provide a much needed community service to the residents of that area.

Session 4: AUTOMATION AND STANDARDIZATION: IMPLICATION FOR THE ARCHIVAL PROFESSION

Terry Latour, University of Southern Mississippi, emphasized that archives, especially small ones, have failed to take advantage of computers. He pointed out that automation does take work and time, work which some people are reluctant to do. In the past it has usually been only the big repositories that could afford automation but now it is becoming increasingly available to smaller institutions.

Lawrence McCrank, Auburn University at Montgomery, emphasized that automation has brought about radical change and that libraries are about "ten years ahead of archives in their thinking." He also emphasized that there is substantial lag time between conceptual and intellectual achievement. He pointed out that the Archival and Manuscripts Control (AMC) format provides tremendous potential, and as a result, standards are "now parameters rather than rules." Libraries are beginning to view materials in terms of aggregate groups, and archivists are increasingly moving toward providing better access to their materials, he added. McCrank emphasized the need for librarians and archivists to work together, despite the challenge of dealing with several national automation systems. He concluded with the suggestion that archives must invest money into technological developments to better support reference services. To accomplish this, McCrank suggested that archivists "make a ten year jump to catch up with libraries, and, at the the same time, avoid many of the mistakes made by them."

Session 5: THE ARCHIVAL IMAGE AND CERTIFICATION

Three lively speakers and pointed discussion revealed that certification and accreditation programs for archivists are topics for vital concern. Alabama and Mississippi archivists present at the joint professional society meeting voted overwhelmingly to support and participate in the general concept of certification and encouraged a program of academic accreditation. They split on approving the current certification proposal of The Society of American Archivists' Professional Development Committee.

Wilbur E. Meneray, Tulane University, speaking as a manuscript curator, said certification was "the most important concept" facing the profession. He urged a broad based liberal arts background for archival professionals. He stated the committee proposal was too vague in defining its testing program and was skewed toward participation in professional organizations in its recertification point assessment.

Stating that "a professional must pay the price," Allen Jones, Auburn University, cited the long history of certification efforts and urged support of the concept now, before an "identity crisis" submerges archivists among librarians and records managers.

Elbert Hilliard, Mississippi Archives and History Department, supported the concept, stating that it should help personnel management in terms of defining criteria for hiring and promotion that should protect against suits and grievances.

(In a continuation of the cooperative spirit of the joint meeting, the foregoing report was provided SMA via access. SALA reporters were Yvonne K. Brater, Michael S. Muskat, Debbie Pendleton and Alden N. Monroe.)

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

April 29, 1986

U.S.M. Gulf Park, Long Beach, MS

President Linda Overman reported on the Society's activities during the past year. She cited the approval of a new constitution and revised bylaws; the change in the membership year to a spring annual meeting cycle; a new membership brochure; a new membership directory; the SAA Administration of Photographic Collections Workshop held in Jackson; representation at the SAA annual meeting in Austin, Texas, and many other things.

Secretary/Treasurer Alice Cox reported that the Society's finances were sound with assets totaling approximately \$3,500.

Membership Chairman Mickey Hennen reported the Society's paid membership was approximately 140.

The format of The Primary Source was changed during the past year because the Mississippi Department of Archives and History began printing the publication. President Overman thanked Lynne Mueller for her editorship during the past two years and she also thanked H.T. Holmes and Marty Sparrow for serving as assistant editors.

The Nominating Committee of Virga Brocks-Shedd, Bill Hanna, and Carol West presented the following new slate of officers for 1986-1987:

President:	Terry S. Latour
Vice-President/President/Elect:	Earl M. Hennen, Jr.
Secretary-Treasurer:	Alice Cox
Directors (1986-1988):	Cynthia Lewis
	Anne Wells

They were elected by acclamation.

The presidency of the Society was relinquished by Linda L. Overman and accepted by Terry S. Latour.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

June 3, 1986

Miss. Dept. of Archives and History, Jackson, MS

Secretary-Treasurer Alice Cox reported that as of June 3, 1986 the Society had a bank balance of \$4,808.79. However, a number of large bills relating to the annual meeting have yet to be received and paid.

Terry Latour reported that 55 paid registrants attended the annual meeting and the total number attending was 63. Total revenue was \$4,043.50 with gross profits anticipated to be \$988.57. SMA's profit would be half of that amount.

Former membership chairman, Mickey Hennen reported that a sizable number of members have yet to renew their membership. An invitation to members of the Mississippi Historical Society to join SMA has resulted in at least 25 new memberships.

At the present time, there is a vacancy in the editorship of The Primary Source. Suzanne Steel has agreed to assume the duties of assistant editor for accessions and news/notes.

Frank N. Walker submitted his resignation from council due to his change of employment and his relocation to the Memphis area. Suzanne Steel was chosen to fill Frank's remaining term on council.

The following committee chairs were appointed:

Conservation:	Linda L. Overman
Membership:	Daniel Den Bleyker
Program:	Mickey Hennen
Ways and Means:	Alice Cox

No appointments were made to the Education Committee which may be activated later.

President Latour asked for the creation of an Archives and Society Committee. Its main charge would be to examine the role of archives in Mississippi society and government, as well as the responsibilities of the Society of Mississippi Archivists in aiding archives, archivists, and the public to improve these institutions and the public's understanding of them. H.T. Holmes was appointed chair and William Hanna, Elbert Hilliard, Cynthia Lewis, Suzanne F. Steel, Anne S. Wells, and Julia M. Young were asked to serve on the committee.

Council discussed the feasibility of having a one day fall workshop, possibly co-sponsored by the Mississippi Museum Association. The topic of exhibits was council's first choice. Mickey Hennen will chair the program committee.

NEWS NOTES

NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Donn C. Neal will become Executive Director of the Society of American Archivists in September. He will succeed Ann Morgan Campbell, who has been SAA Director since 1974.

Neal's appointment was announced by SAA President Shonnie Finnegan, who said, "Donn Neal brings to the position a record of extraordinarily successful experience in the management of non-profit organizations, along with strong communication skills and a career commitment to the goals of the Society."

Donn Neal comes to SAA from the Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education, where he has served as Executive Director since 1981. He was also Vice President of the Great Lakes College Association (1976-81) and Assistant Professor of History at Elmira College (1967-76).

Neal earned a PhD. from the University of Michigan in history; he holds an M.A. in history, also from the University of Michigan.

MLA RECORDS SOUGHT

The Archives and History Committee, at its April meeting, surveyed the records of the Mississippi Library Association. During the coming year, committee members, along with Executive Secretary DeLois Minton and other volunteers, will begin arranging the records, providing for better preservation of materials and filling gaps in the collection.

The committee needs your help in locating past records to complete MLA's archives. If you have possession, or know the whereabouts of the papers of any MLA president who served prior to 1956, please contact the Archives and Library Committee, Mississippi Library Association, Clinton, MS 39056. A list of past presidents can be found in the Summer 1984 issue of Mississippi Libraries.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES

The University of South Alabama Photographic Archives has received a \$10,800 grant from NHPRC to print and catalog the historically significant negatives in the S. Blake McNeely Collection. McNeely was a freelance photographer in Mobile in the 1930s and 1940s, and his negatives chronicle life in the area during the Depression and World War II.

RARE COPY OF DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE IS FOUND

A rare early copy of the Declaration of Independence has been found in a small New Hampshire museum, and the state has stepped in to prevent its sale until officials can determine if it's public property. The 210-year old document, one of 23 known to exist from the Declaration's first printing, was brought to the attention of the New York-based Sotheby's auction house by the Society of the Cincinnati, a museum in Exeter, said David Redden, a Sotheby's senior vice president. Sotheby's planned to offer the document for sale until the New Hampshire attorney general's office said there is a question about whether the document is private or public property. After the famous adoption of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia in 1776, first printings were given to each of the 13 colonies and to prominent citizens. Experts know the document is from the first printing because of the layout and the name of the printer, John Dunlap, said Selby Kiffer, Sotheby's prints and Americana specialist. It was printed either the evening of July 4 or the morning of July 5, 1776, he said. - From an AP release

NATCHEZ TRACE COLLECTION

The University of Texas has acquired a collection of materials documenting Southern life from 1780 to 1900. Called the "Natchez Trace Collection," the materials include diaries, correspondence, court records, periodicals, household inventories, business ledgers, newspapers, medical records, maps and many other types of documents. Don E. Carleton, director of the Barker Texas History Center where the collection is maintained at the University, calls the collection "one of the most significant acquisitions ever made in the effort to document the history of the deep South, particularly that of the lower Mississippi River Valley area." For details, write Carleton at the Barker Texas History Center, The University of Texas at Austin, SRH 2.109, Austin, Texas 78713-7330.

PUBLICATIONS

The New York State Archives has issued a new publication to help local government officials manage the growing paperwork in their offices. Managing Local Government Records: A Manual for Local Government Officials in New York State (Albany 1985), is the first manual ever produced in New York to show local officials how to create a total records program covering paperwork from initial creation to final disposition. This publication lays out basic records management concepts--retention and disposition, surveying and analysis, inactive storage, microfilming--promote the creation of usable records,

prevent the creation of unnecessary records, make records available when needed, and make sure that records are legally disposed of after they have outlived their usefulness. Sound records management will ensure that local governments use their limited resources efficiently and economically. Single copies of the manual are available free from the New York State Archives, Room 10A63, Cultural Education Center, Albany, New York 12230.

The records of the Indianola City Cemetery have been copied by members of the David Holmes Chapter of the DAR and are being published in a 100-page edition. There is a limited supply of the books, which are priced at \$10.00 a copy, plus \$2.00 postal charges. Make checks payable to David Holmes Chapter, DAR, and mail to Mrs. Joy M. Tindall, Route 1, Box 266, Indianola, MS 38751, phone (601) 887-4632.

The Archivists' Round Table of Metropolitan New York and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference have published a brochure, "Selecting an Archivist," for organizations, corporations, and individuals seeking guidance in hiring a professional to develop and maintain archival collections. It is available from the New York round table, c/o Pace University Archives, Pace Plaza--Room T 1519, New York, N.Y. 10038. For single copies, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Multiple copies cost \$.10 each.

A new brochure, "Who is the 'I' in Archives?," available from the Society of American Archivists. Explaining the purposes and benefits of archives for the general public as well as specialists, the publication should aid public relations, special events, fundraising, education, membership development, and other activities of archivists and historical organizations. The costs are \$10/50; \$60/500; and \$115/1,000 prepaid. Postage and handling will be added to charge orders. SAA, 600 S. Federal, #504, Chicago, Ill. 60605 (312) 922-0140.

The National Archives has recently issued a series of five catalogs of select National Archives microfilm publications that group NARA microfilm publications by geographical area: "The South and Southwest," "Central States," "Chesapeake/Mid-Atlantic," "The West," and "New England." The contents are arranged by state within the region. The introduction of each catalog lists the field branch that serves the region. The catalogs are available free of charge to institutions. Individuals may obtain copies by sending a check for \$2.00 for each catalog plus \$1.50 for postage and handling payable to the National Archives Trust Fund, to the Technical Services Branch (NEPS), National Archives, Washington, DC 20408.

The Archival Appraisal of Photographs: A RAMP Study With Guidelines is a 118-page monograph prepared by Bill Leary, an archivist in NARA's Agency Services Division, under contract with the International Council on Archives. This study includes a discussion of general considerations in appraising photographs; how to conduct a photo survey; specific appraisal criteria including age, subject, uniqueness, identification, quality, quantity, accessibility, and photographer; and special considerations in appraising government photographs, newspaper photographs, commercial photography, and

amateur photography. The study concludes with 44 specific guidelines for the appraiser of archival photographs. Copies may be requested from the Division of the General Information Programme, Documentation Centre, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris, France.

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SMA WORKSHOP PLANNED FOR OCTOBER 24, 1986

The Society of Mississippi Archivists is planning to sponsor a one-day workshop on October 24, 1986, addressing the basic concerns that archives, libraries, and museums face in the exhibition of archival materials in their custody. The workshop will focus on the interpretation, planning, and design of exhibits, and the conservation of items selected for exhibit. Guest faculty for the workshop include Elaine Kirkland, associate curator of costumes and textiles and visual arts archivist, Atlanta Historical Society; Linda Overman, documents conservator, Mississippi Department of Archives and History; and Cavett Taff, curator of exhibits, Mississippi State Historical Museum. The registration fee for the workshop is \$25.00. Those persons interested in attending should contact Earl M. Hennen, Jr., workshop chairman, at P.O. Box 1151, Jackson, MS 39205-1151.